

Let Me

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by [Vanemis](#)

Summary

When Ghost returns from a mission gone wrong, Soap steps in to help without question.

On days like these, it was impossible to get anything done, which was unfortunate because half the staff were away and most of the team members were out on leave. Without any missions to plan or gear up for, a quiet day would've been perfect for catching up on his work, maybe even take a couple more hours at the gym, or run around the mostly-empty airfield. But with the constant turmoil in his gut and the worry nagging at the forefront of his mind, Soap couldn't devote his attention to anything serious. Not even a blast of deafening music while he tried to jog on the treadmill helped.

He wasn't scared. No. Being scared for his friend was a downright insult to both of them. He was anxious, though. It wasn't a very long flight, only two or three hours if they ran into complications, but that almost always happened. After two weeks in some broken-down, poverty-stricken town, Ghost was meant to return from his mission with a kill count. He hadn't briefed Soap much, after all they weren't going together, but he'd given a timeframe and had already exceeded it by one day.

Soap knew that, though. He'd overheard the chatter from techs planning the retrieval, going on about some delay in the plan. And by overheard, he meant he'd snuck into the room to steal a headset and listened in on their conversations. There was no point bothering them at their stations. Plus, his behaviour would be notified and he really didn't need another slap on the wrist. In the back of his mind, he wondered if the base had half-evacuated because they knew Soap would be running around stressed and fidgeting anxiously. And even if it was somewhat of an insult to Ghost, he couldn't help it.

At least when he went on missions with him, Soap could keep an eye on him and watch his back. Ghost had been assigned another small team. Three guys Soap had not seen much of around the base. Maybe they were good back-up or maybe they were cock-ups and that sent Soap's stomach in a downwards spiral.

"Be advised, Carrier Five is inbound," a voice spoke into the ear piece Soap had kept in all day since yesterday. "ETA three minutes." Soap slammed his fist down on the treadmill's controls to turn it off.

"Copy that, relaying to ATC."

Three minutes was not enough time to run into the showers and clean himself up. And yeah, he could wait until Ghost had handed in his equipment and given a brief status report to his superiors and *then*

gone to say hello. But he was already jogging down the halls towards the hangars by the time he heard the techs talk about the plane landing on the runway.

He did slow down and catch his breath before he entered the double doors leading to the noisy hangar. The last thing he wanted was to be made fun of for rushing. Then again, his grey shirt was damp with sweat from his exercise. If Ghost brought it up, he'd tell him it was just from that. Soap did wait until the plane's engines cut completely and the propellers stopped spinning madly before approaching the lowering bay door.

Two guys came out, both still strapped in their gear. They'd only just been pulled out of the mission before returning home. Upon seeing Soap, one of them nodded politely.

"How did it go?" Soap asked, hoping the answer would be one word.

"We lost a man." His friend bowed his head angrily. "We couldn't bring him back with us."

Soap blinked, unable to breathe. "And the lieutenant?"

The first guy jerked his thumb back up the ramp. "He's pissed off. Won't talk to us. He's still sat there, just fuming."

Slowly, the ability to breathe returned and Soap nodded. Losing a soldier was hard but it happened, and Soap didn't know these men well enough to care deeply for their loss. Still, Ghost was not one to just sit and stew in anger. If he was really angry, he would've been the first off the plane with one goal in mind; to beat the shit out of a punching bag until his hands bled. It was concerning to hear otherwise.

"I'll handle it. You boys go rest."

Neither of them said more than a tired acknowledgement. Soap ignored them in favour of climbing up the ramp. Sure enough, Ghost was sat there on the left towards the cockpit. If it hadn't been for the white of his mask and the green overhead lights, he might've blended with the shadows entirely.

"Hey, man... Heard it went sideways. You good?" Soap asked, walking slowly in case Ghost wanted to punch something that could bleed. It didn't happen often. Ghost was silent in his rage but he wasn't

mindless, and those very rare times when he'd decked Soap had usually been for fair reasons. It took months to figure out what buttons could and couldn't be pressed when it came to his friend.

Ghost didn't answer. He sat still with his elbows on his thighs and his hands hanging between his knees. His weapons were holstered and as far as Soap could tell, he wasn't injured.

"Look, whatever happened, it's done now. I've got a couple beers stashed in my room. I was gonna share but you can have them both." Soap finally reached him. "Ghost?"

The close distance let him see his eyes and Soap sighed softly. Ghost's eyes were wide open, pupils blown to the max, and he wasn't budging an inch. Soap quietly knelt down in front of him and placed a hand on his knee, giving it a small shake.

"Si? Can you hear me?"

There was no indication that Ghost had heard anything and Soap wanted to find those two idiots and point out the very-fucking-obvious problem with Ghost. He wasn't ignoring them, he wasn't angry. He was in full-bodied shock. Soap leaned closer and reached up, gently brushing his fingertips against the fabric on Ghost's jaw. Sometimes, all it took was another shock to the system to wake somebody up. A bit of cold water or a breeze of fresh air, or the touch of bare skin. Soap curved his hand up to trace the visible skin around Ghost's eyes, smearing the faded grease-paint above his pale eyebrow.

"Come on, mate, you're okay. You're home, you're safe, and I'm here."

Soap had experienced shock himself before. Quite a few times early on in his deployment, in fact. He'd also seen it happen to others but Ghost was almost never fazed. He'd had bombs explode too close for comfort, had bullets scrape his face, had weak floors give out under his feet- the list went on. Ghost had walked away from every single deadly encounter and seeing him sat here, stuck and unable to get past whatever had shut his mind down, was frightening. Soap cradled the side of his face.

"You'll get through this. Hell, even if it's to tell me to shuddup, it'll be something. Come on, Simon, you've got this."

Still no change. Soap sighed and leaned back, moving his hand to Ghost's knee, and reached for his radio.

“This is Mactavish, I need a medic in the hangars immediately. I repeat, I need a medic in the hangars.”

Someone on the general channel thankfully replied. “Copy that, sir. Medic is on the way.”

Soap set the radio back on his belt and looked up at Ghost. His hands were trembling and carefully, Soap took one between his own. He turned it over and winced. The fabric on the palm was burnt and the skin underneath red and scorched. The same had happened to his other hand. It couldn't simply be the pain causing this.

Soap set about taking off the gloves one at a time, tugging the damaged fabric gently over the burns and then pulling off the fingers. With both gloves ruined and discarded on the ground, Soap could see the burns were minimal and the skin was angry but not blistered or caked in blood. Ghost was excellent at hiding pain when it mattered, like a wounded animal, and under all the heavy gear, there was no telling what else he'd sustained. When it came to small, worthless injuries, he would moan about it childishly, but only in the privacy of his friends' company. Real injuries shut him down and it was hard to tell apart pained silence from regular Ghost-silence.

The sound of rushed footsteps startled Soap from what he'd been doing; gently rubbing the joints of Ghost's fingers and his wrists in order to get blood flow to the burns and distract him from the pain. When he looked up at his friend, he saw no change in his startled expression.

“You called for me?” A woman said, rushing up the ramp with a bag in hand. The red cross on her uniform marked her almost as obviously as the medical bag itself.

“Yeah. The Lieutenant's in shock and his hands are burned,” Soap told her, moving aside enough to make room without letting go of Ghost's wrist.

“Understood. Any other injuries?”

“I have no idea.”

The medic had brought everything with her, of course, and she quickly set about spraying Ghost's burns lightly before bandaging them up. It wasn't severe. He'd be healed in a week or so. Once his palms were dealt with, she took out a small light from her bag. She held it in one hand while the other tipped Ghost's chin up to meet the

light. It waved across his eyes.

“No shrinking. Has he said anything? Blinked? Made any motion?”

Soap shook his head. “No. I don’t know how long he’s been like this. At most three hours.”

The medic glanced at him. Her disapproval was heavy but what could he do? He wasn’t on the mission to begin with. Regardless of her opinion, she took out various bits of equipment. Soap watched her with half interest. With all the gear in the way, she had to take blood pressure from Ghost’s forearm because the jacket and body armour wouldn’t allow for more access. As she pressed the stethoscope to his skin, her expression soured slightly.

“His heartrate is very fast. Have you tried moving him?”

“No. Why?”

“Fresh air can help. I’m going to remove his mask.”

Soap cringed inwardly. Ghost hated that. He was certain the Brit would rather die than let anybody else take it off for him, but she was a doctor and she knew best. While she grabbed an oxygen mask, Soap reached up and tugged at the edges of the balaclava and pulled it from the confines of his collar. Seeing bare skin felt wrong and Soap knew Ghost would kill him if he ever found out. The mask was pushed up over his jaw and lips, and rested just above his nose, giving Ghost just a bit of privacy.

“The whole thing needs to be removed,” the medic spoke up, finishing her task of plugging in tubes to the hand-held tank of oxygen.

“He won’t like that,” Soap complained.

“If it is a matter of confidentiality, you can step out and I will continue. My job is to aid people, regardless of their personal beliefs.”

Soap wanted to roll his eyes. It wasn’t a religious thing. Ghost was just Ghost. He had a reputation to maintain. But Soap wasn’t about to get up and leave, so he bit his lip and huffed.

“Sorry, mate. Gotta do what the doc says.” At least he was apologising for it before pushing the rest of the mask off Ghost’s face and pulling it free completely. It was easy to forget what he looked like

underneath but Soap gave his ashen-blond hair a kind and slow ruffle before tucking his mask into his pocket.

“Here. Hold this over his mouth and nose.”

The medic passed him the tank and plastic mask. It fit easily into place and Soap watched his friend’s eyes for a reaction, hoping to see anything that would break the stone-like stillness. Next to him, the medic was prepping a needle. She wasted no time cleaning a small patch of skin on Ghost’s forearm and inserting the needle, dispensing it quickly.

“You’re gonna feel better in no time, Simon. Don’t you worry.”

Soap was the one worrying, but the medic said nothing and waited a couple minutes for the drug to administer. When she stopped looking at her watch, she took her light again and waved it over Ghost’s eyes. There was no reaction again.

“Has he ever suffered from paralysis before?” She asked, frowning to herself.

“Only once since I’ve known him. Happened a few years ago but it was over in ten minutes.” Soap stroked Ghost’s wrist. “I’ve never seen him like this before.”

“It’s common in new recruits, this level of shock. I’m going to give him another dose.”

As she filled another needle, Soap reached up and petted through Ghost’s messy hair. It was bordering on too long and sooner or later, he’d have to get an inch or two cut off whether he liked it or not. Soap never asked who cut the quiet man’s hair. Surely that meant showing off his face, or at least wearing his half-mask. Maybe it was done late at night in an isolated room so no one could walk in. Regardless, the pale strands were damp with sweat and grease and Soap hoped his touch was reassuring as the medication was pushed into his veins.

“Come on, Si. The longer you stay like this, the less time you get to nag at me. I know that’s your favourite pastime.”

“Dilation of the pupils,” the medic said, mostly to herself. “You can remove the oxygen mask now.”

Soap obeyed and set it aside, his heart clenching with hope. “You got this. Come on.”

Ghost blinked. Just once, enough to coat his dry eyes, but Soap saw the awareness replace the dull look.

It happened so fast. Ghost suddenly lurched for him, moving far too skilfully for a man who'd been stuck in shock for hours, and Soap found his back connecting with the cold metal grating. He grunted as the floor dug into his shoulders and the full weight of his friend threw itself onto his chest. He saw silver and instinct took in, before he even realised that Ghost had drawn a knife on him. The blade was freezing cold against his throat, held back by Soap's hands firmly wrapped around Ghost's wrists.

"Jesus Christ, Simon! It's me!"

"Lieutenant Riley, stand down," the medic shouted, fear in her voice at the sudden turn of aggression. "You are back on U.S. soil, we are on your side. Stand down."

Soap had to give her credit. She held her ground. But then again, he was the one with a knife dangerously close to his artery.

"Simon, love, calm down. It's just me, I'm not a threat."

The knife retreated slowly and Soap stared into Ghost's wild eyes, refusing the break the contact. His eyes were red but the understanding and thought process were coming back quickly, and Ghost blinked back tears. The knife was dropped and Soap managed to crawl out from under him, into a kneeling position. For such a big man, Ghost was quick and Soap was soon tackled again. Strong arms nearly crushed his ribs as Ghost held on for dear life, suddenly letting out a heart-wrenching sob. Soap felt sick. He couldn't begin to guess what sent someone like Ghost into this state but the chemicals in his blood were surely causing the outburst and overwhelming emotions.

The man shook in his arms, audibly crying into Soap's shoulder. In that moment, there was no control. No one could've stopped Ghost from breaking down, short of knocking him out, and Soap held onto him tightly, letting him whine pitifully. It occurred to him that he probably reeked of sweat from his workout but there was nothing he could do about that now.

"Are you injured?" The medic asked shakily. Soap had forgotten she was there.

"No. I'm okay. I, uh, I'll take care of the rest."

It was a badly hidden order and the medic nodded. "If his condition worsens or if he slips back into shock, bring him to the infirmary immediately. Or if he is injured elsewhere."

Soap nodded weakly. "Yeah. I will. And uhm..."

"This is all confidential," she added, following his thought-pattern. "This kind of behaviour is normal for patients like him. Let him tire himself out and don't try to stop this. Forcing any sort of barrier down will make it worse in the future."

"Trust me, I won't."

The crying came to an end by the time the medic had restocked her bag. Ghost shivered in his arms but his grip loosened drastically and he rested against Soap without supporting any of his own weight.

"You're okay, Si, you're okay," Soap mumbled quietly against his head, turning slightly to press a soft kiss where he could reach without straining. "Good boy, just let it out."

"I feel sick," Ghost whispered.

At that, the medic reached into her bag for a disposable paper one. She held it just in case but Ghost made no noise or move to indicate he was going to throw up. Soap stroked the back of his neck, disturbing the chain there.

"If you need to, go ahead," Soap hinted.

"No. Not that sort," Ghost mumbled back. "M dizzy."

"Deep breaths, buddy. Can you sit back a bit? Stretch out?"

Ghost nodded against his neck and slowly moved back with the speed of a corpse. Soap steadied him with one hand on his shoulder and gave him a weak smile when Ghost finally met his eyes properly.

"There you are, love. We'll sit here until you can walk."

Ghost glanced around, noting the medic who was keeping an eye on the situation before deciding that the lieutenant was in good hands. He blinked and turned his head back to Soap.

"M home?"

"Yeah. You're back in Arizona." Soap dared a look at the medic.

“Memory loss is expected. I will take my leave then. Again, if anything is out of the ordinary-”

Soap hummed. “I know. Thanks for your help.”

“Of course.” She left on that note, taking her medical bag with her but leaving the paper one behind just in case.

Soap turned his attention back to his friend, resettling to sit beside him so Ghost could recline against the wall of folded seats and just breathe. He had no idea how much time passed while he watched Ghost’s chest heave up and down, or watched his eyes dart around in fear before settling on Soap and calming down again. The shock and the drugs had done a number on him but after some time, Ghost huffed.

“The floor’s hurting my ass,” he complained.

Soap chuckled. “Mine too. How ‘bout trying to walk? My room’s closer and we can take the quiet way.”

“Yeah.”

Standing up first, Soap reached down and took Ghost’s forearms, pulling him up steadily until the taller man was able to hold himself up. He wobbled a bit but he remained on his feet. Soap wasn’t sure walking was going to happen but Ghost proved him wrong, stumbling slowly but surely down the ramp and then across the empty hangar. It felt similar to helping an elderly person, what with the speed and cautiousness of every step, but the halls were quiet and they blissfully didn’t come across any other person.

Soap was glad his room was nearby. Ghost’s was much further away, on the other side of the barracks where few people stayed. He opened up the door and guided Ghost to the neat bed, letting him sit down.

“How are you feelin’?”

“Not great. Water?”

“Course.”

Soap rushed to grab a bottle he had on the side. He uncapped it and handed it to Ghost, who made the motion to lift his mask, only there

was nothing there. Ghost's eyes widened and Soap guiltily pulled the mask out of his trouser pocket to set it on the bed beside him.

"The doc needed it off," Soap quietly explained, hating the look of betrayal in Ghost's eyes for a moment before he downed the whole bottle in one go. "You're obviously staying here to rest but, uhm, d'you want me to fetch clothes out of your room?"

Ghost set the empty bottle aside. "I need a shower first."

"Mine's in a tub," Soap reminded. "I dunno if I want you standing. How 'bout a bath instead?"

"God, yes."

"Okay. Gimme a minute then."

Soap left him to go plug the tub and fill it halfway. He let it run as he came back into the room, wondering if he should sprint to Ghost's room now and get his clothes, or wait until he was cleaning himself up. But between knowing the tub would overflow and the fact that leaving his friend alone in deep water wasn't smart, Soap just decided to let Ghost borrow his things. He rarely used the tub for its intended purpose and always jumped under the shower or used the communal one by the gym. As far as he knew, a lot of the officer-rank lodgings had one. This particular base had been funded better than others he'd visited.

Once he thought it had been running long enough, he cut off the water. It was more than half full but he doubted his friend would complain. When he returned to his side, Ghost was miserably attempting to undo the straps and buckles of his armoured vest.

"Let me help," Soap offered, stepping closer before Ghost could try to protect his pride. "Gotta let your hands heal."

"Yeah."

"Give 'em a week, I reckon."

"Yeah."

Ghost had that distant tone to his voice that indicated his mind was firmly elsewhere. Maybe he hated the thought of being helpless. Soap wouldn't put it past him. But even if he could grit his teeth through the pain and take off all those kilos of gear and armour, he would

severely fuck up his hands. So Soap worked fast and set everything aside, making zero comment when it was obvious he'd be helping with more than gear. He'd been in the same position before a couple times, with other soldiers, and God knew he'd been where Ghost was struggling to complete basic tasks because of injury. He'd dislocated a hip when he was seventeen. That had been horrible, both in pain and in embarrassment.

And naturally, Ghost said nothing. What was there to say? He wasn't going to apologise for needing Soap to unlace his boots. He surely thought it but the words would never come out. Instead, he sat still and let Soap manipulate whatever body part he needed to move around. Once he was down to a sweat-soaked shirt and his trousers, Soap stood and took a step back.

"Lean on me if you need to."

This time, there was more energy behind the movements. Ghost was still shaky and his breathing quickened once he was up on his feet, staggering to the next room, but he was regaining his strength. Soap watched him carefully, ready for his friend to suddenly grab him or stumble. Ghost made it and started to tug on his shirt, attempting to pull it overhead. He got halfway there before needing to stop and take a deep breath. With the fabric moved, Soap understood why it was hard to lift his arms above his head. The left side of his chest was bruised deeply, with dark marks running from his waist to his underarm.

"Jesus, Simon..."

"I fell."

"From a three-storey building?"

Ghost huffed. "Two floors. Off a mezzanine. I landed on the guy. He wasn't as lucky as me. He hit concrete."

Soap winced and wordlessly grabbed the shirt, pulling it over Ghost's head and down his scarred arms. There were so many, faded and pale, and new from recent months. He walked around Ghost to examine the rest of his torso but he only saw bruises and dry cuts where the blood had clumped days prior.

"Mactavish?"

Soap met his eyes. He had a feeling about what Ghost wanted to say,

judging from the way he refused to truly look at him. They were close. Close enough that they easily called each other friends. They would both take bullets for one another. Somehow, overcoming this next step felt more invasive than anything they'd done before.

"I got you," Soap mumbled between them, not looking at Ghost as he helped him with his belt and zipper.

The sooner he got it done, the sooner Ghost could relax and they could get one step closer to his recovery. Neither man said anything more on the topic as the trousers fell to the tiled floor and Ghost could handle the last part. Pain be damned, he wasn't going to make his friend do that. Soap stayed still as one hand landed on his shoulder for support so Ghost could climb into the tub. He hissed at the heat briefly as it stung his wounds, but he laid back against the plastic rest.

"Thank you," Ghost mumbled.

"Anytime. Really. I'm..." Soap sighed and decided to sit on the closed lid of the toilet. It gave Ghost some privacy. "I've never seen you like this before. I want to do anything I can to help. I'm sorry about the mask."

"It's okay. I get it."

Soap kept his gaze averted as he heard water being splashed. He wasn't going to look. He'd seen Ghost naked before, it was hard to avoid in their current lifestyle, but this was different to catch a glance of bare ass in the communal shower. Soap enjoyed the sight plenty but staring now, when Ghost was not fully himself, was beyond wrong.

"I'm sorry for earlier," Ghost added after some time. "Did I hurt you?"

Soap had almost forgotten. Sure, he'd been mostly worried for his friend but God was it weird to have been on the other end of Ghost's frightening strength. The man was death-incarnate. He was terrifying and Soap took sick pleasure in watching him kill with such brutality and precision. To have been classed as the enemy and faced that terror himself... Soap was very glad he had quick reflexes.

"No, just scared the shite out of me."

Ghost laughed softly. "My bad."

It was better to laugh it off as a mistake, rather than admit Ghost had very nearly killed him. Soap would never hold it against him but it was still true. He dared a brief glance at the killer and met his gaze. The tub was high enough that he didn't see anything inappropriate so he held his gaze. The black smudges around his eyes were almost all gone, staining the water.

"You okay?"

"Fuck no, but I'll live. This all... this stays between us. Right?"

Soap scoffed. "Nah, I was actually gonna brag to the guys that I took a romantic bath with you. Dumbass. Course it stays between us."

Ghost shook his head. "The fuck is romantic about this? I'm bleeding in your bath tub and my head feels like I've been hung upside down for several hours."

"Just cute couple things."

"If I could lift my arm, I'd slap you."

"Your body might be shagged but I see your mind is just fine." Soap reclined and it made the porcelain rattle slightly. "Got me so fucking worried when I saw you. Those guys you were with, they didn't fucken realise at all. Fucken shiteheads."

Ghost hummed and lazily reached for a bottle of gel. "They weren't great in the field either. I don't mind leading newbies but I shouldn't have to remind them to get in cover when they're being shot. We lost a guy too."

"Yeah, they said. How?"

"Tripped an explosive running round a door. I told him to wait. He didn't listen. And now he's splattered against a wall."

Soap sighed. "Is that what fucked you up?"

Ghost paused halfway through rubbing the gel between his hands. Soap had not even realised he'd thrown the bandages off and onto the ground. He would re-wrap his palms after but clearly the soap wasn't stinging too bad.

"No."

"Must've been bad."

“Yeah.” Ghost flicked his gaze up to him briefly before returning it to the water’s bobbing surface. “There were more people there than we expected. Family members, I suppose. I don’t think they were hostages. I was stuck in a firefight. Bullets and fuel don’t mix well. I don’t know whose fault it was, mine or the target, but the result was bad. People got set alight.”

Soap swallowed thickly. He couldn’t handle the sight of people burning alive. It happened in war, far too often, but in missions like Ghost’s one, it was rarer. Explosions were easier to witness and control, and he made his living from that, but fire was unpredictable and all-consuming.

“There were children. Little kids. Knee high. One ran to me and I tried to put out her face. It didn’t help. I had to put a bullet in her to stop the pain.”

Ghost sat there quietly after his admission. Soap had no words. He wasn’t sure he could’ve made that decision if he’d been in his place but what could he say? Ghost had done what he could. He’d burnt his hands trying to help. The man took a deep breath.

“Anyways, the target was killed and we got the hell out. I don’t remember going onto the plane. Hell, not even how I got to the evac. I just...”

“Autopilot,” Soap added.

“Yeah. Basically.” He lifted his foamy hands and resumed cleaning. “Next thing I know, you’re in front of me.” He looked up. “I’m glad you were. Not sure anyone else would’ve stayed with me and not poked fun.”

“As if I’d laugh at your condition.”

“My point exactly. You won’t. You’re a good man and I know you won’t tell anyone about what happened. Shit, can you imagine if the guys saw me cry?”

Soap didn’t want to. “You needed to. She gave you two doses of that crap. I think it was way too much.”

“I don’t know. She’s the doctor after all. It doesn’t matter now. What matters is that I somehow have to get my ass out of this bath in one piece. I’m not gonna manage without flashing you either.”

His humour was going back tenfold, and Soap was beyond glad. Out in the field, Ghost was stone-faced but he was a little shit behind closed doors. He stood up and grabbed a couple towels out of the sink cupboard.

“Nothing I ain’t seen before, Simon. Trust me, I’m not the sort to make a move on a semi-vegetable.”

Ghost frowned. “Ouch.”

“Am I wrong?”

“Considering my joints refuse to co-operate, no. You’re unfortunately right. Okay, just stand close so I don’t crack my skull open.”

“And there’s the drama queen I know,” Soap teased, obeying Ghost’s order and standing next to the tub.

“Says you. I haven’t slept in three days, I’ve been beaten half to death, and my limbs feel like jelly. Just be nice to me, for once in your damn life.”

Ghost struggled to lift himself up onto the edge to sit on it. The plastic creaked under his weight but it held, allowing him to take a towel and dry what he could reach without straining. Soap silently knelt down to handle his calves and feet, and he half-expected Ghost to make a joke but he was too preoccupied. Soap stood to dry his back and once his friend was taken care of, he stepped back in order to help him stand. It was easier this time to get him on the bed but before Soap could sit him down and fetch some sleepwear, Ghost crawled under the covers.

“You, uh... You just gonna sleep naked?”

“Unless you plan to help me put on boxers, then yes. I do,” Ghost grumbled, shoving his face into the only pillow. The beds on site were singles, after all. It would be a tight squeeze.

“Okay. Fair enough.”

Soap sighed and glanced at what little space there was left on the bed. He needed a shower too.

“Do you want to just sleep?”

“Yep,” came the mumble against the pillow.

Soap chuckled and huffed. Ghost's hands seemed okay, and he clearly wasn't in the mood for food or banter. He needed rest. Soap was sure he'd return from his quick clean to find Ghost deeply asleep, and that was exactly what he found.

Trying to make some room for himself, Soap squeezed in against Ghost. The man's soft breathing was a relief to hear. With the state of his injuries, he wouldn't be put back in action for a few weeks at least. Soap was going to enjoy the time he had with him. He curled up on the corner of the pillow and gently ruffled Ghost's hair, letting relief and exhaustion tire him out.

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